





THE OPENING OF THE BALKAN WAR

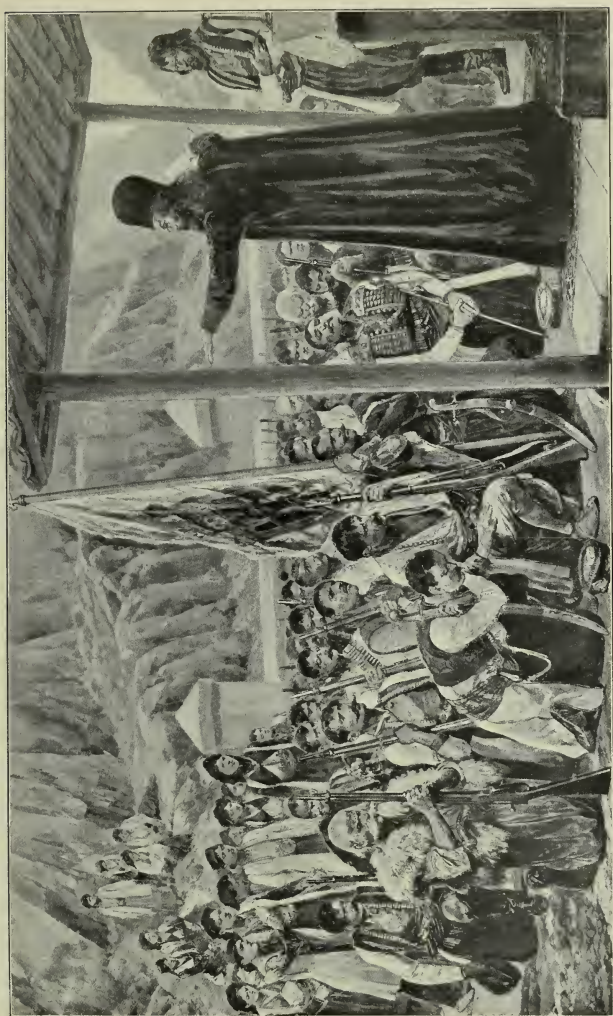
((The Montenegrin Army Blessed by Its Priests Before Starting For the War))

By the contemporary English artist, R. Caton Woodville

FEW political events have ever taken the Powers of Europe so completely by surprise as did the outbreak of the Balkan states in 1912. Turkish outrages upon the Christian people still subject to them in Europe, had been so long continued without retribution, the little independent Balkan states had seemed so obedient to the Powers' command about maintaining peace, that it seemed as though the Turkish Empire in Europe might still last for generations. Then suddenly in October of 1912 the King of Montenegro declared he would no longer allow the massacre of his countrymen across the Turkish border; and he sent his troops to war. To the Montenegrins it was a holy war. The army included every man who could march forth. Their priests blessed them, and they set out with religious ceremonials, vowing to free their countrymen or perish.

Secretly the Montenegrin king had already arranged his alliances with the neighboring states of Bulgaria, Servia, and Greece. These states now also declared war, and defeated Turkey completely. They seized for themselves practically all her European possessions. The Bulgarians even conquered Adrianople and pressed forward to the siege of Constantinople. Then at last the allies fell to quarreling over the division of the spoil, and Turkey, raising her despairing head, managed to recapture Adrianople. So at least she still holds a fragment of her European territory. Practically, however, she has become once more a merely Asiatic power.







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SCANDINAVIA

(The Cradle of European Life)

Prepared specially for the present series by Austin Smith

SCANDINAVIA is a general name given to the ancient Northland of Europe, the chill countries surrounding the broad and shallow Baltic Sea. To-day the eastern part of this region is all subject to Russia; the south coast of the Baltic has become German; and of the string of islands in the north Atlantic, only Iceland and Greenland still remain under Scandinavian control. The three countries, however, which have always been the heart of this region, continue to survive as independent kingdoms, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. No one of these three is very powerful to-day; but at one time or another in the past, each of them has held a commanding position in European history.

A glance at the map will show how closely the three kingdoms are connected. Their people have been sailors, sea-rovers, since the earliest dawn of our knowledge of them. So that their narrow, island-crowded straits and seas have not divided but united them. They have often been held by a single ruler and their history is so closely interwoven, their people are so alike, that really they are one nation rather than three. Norway has always been what the map shows it, a single narrow strip of mountainous Atlantic coast line, deeply indented with rockbound fiords. Denmark is a region of many sea-washed islands, low and sandy. Sweden has a mountainous highland of Dalecarlia sweeping down into broad lake-covered plains, a land almost as much enwrapped in water as the Danish islands.







THE STONE AGE IN SWEDEN

(Scandinavians of Many Ages Ago and the Monsters of Their Time)

From a painting by the German artist, Fritz P. Schmidt

QUITE recently men of science have dug up among the highlands of Sweden relics which show us not only that men existed there many ages ago, but also that there has been a continuous development through all the ages. That is, the Swedes and Norwegians of to-day are directly descended from those of the Stone Age. In other European countries we know that one set of wandering invaders after another have superseded the earlier inhabitants. In general these invaders have come from the east, from the direction of Asia. None of them, however, ever penetrated the icy north or crossed the savage waters of the Baltic to invade Sweden. There the original inhabitants developed undisturbed. The man of the Stone Age is the man of to-day. Indeed many scientists now incline to believe that it was these Scandinavians who first ventured forth from their cheerless homes and wandered southward, perhaps over part of Asia, and then turned westward to become the ancestors of most of the races of southern Europe.

In the wild days of the earliest Scandinavians, man was still a savage. He may have faced and fought against the animal monsters of an earlier geological epoch. We find in Sweden relics of huge and terrible extinct animals, great lizards such as our picture shows, cold-blooded, sluggish beasts whom northern legend has remembered as dragons, supposing that they must have fire within to keep them alive amid the awful cold.







ODIN'S DEATH VOYAGE

(The Body of Odin, Scandinavia's First Hero, Given to Fire and Sea)

From an old anonymous print

GRADUALLY in this far dim northland there grew up a whole series of legends, myths telling of deeds ascribed to the gods. Probably these gods were originally kings in the land and the stories had a basis on fact. But what was real and what imaginary, who the kings were, or who the gods, we can no longer tell. We can only accept the legends as we find them.

They make as their chief god and hero, Odin or Woden, whom we have already met as the chief German god. But in German story he is wholly a god, a creator of men. In Scandinavian story he is still chiefly a man, a king ruling only his own people and dying among them. According to this legend, Odin, king of the Asa folk, led his followers from the mainland into central Sweden, fought the sturdy Goths of Gotland in southern Sweden, and the treacherous cunning Lapps of Nordland, and united all three under his rule, making a threefold kingdom such as exists in Sweden to-day. Then Odin taught his people all wisdom, and built for them the "high halls" or Up-sala which became their chief shrine of faith and learning. When he died his body was seated in his favorite war-ship, surrounded by his chief treasures, and was launched upon the waters of the Baltic. Fire was set to the ship and it sailed flaming out of sight across the stormy waves bearing its glorious burden. Some day, says legend, Odin is to come back and once more lead his people.







ÆGIR THE SEA GOD

(The Sea God Protects Men From His Children, the Wild Waves)

From a painting by the Scandinavian artist, C. Ehrenberg

O DIN was remembered as the main god of the northland. But many other gods were ranked with him, and among these was the sea-god. The sea came to be the chief home of the men of the north. Every summer they set out in their little ships exploring and plundering. At first they dreaded the ocean exceedingly and made up stories of a fierce and terrible sea goddess, Ran, who hated men and was always urging the waves on to attack and devour them. By degrees, however, they came to be such skilful sailors that they no longer feared the storms. They saw also that the sea by guiding them to other lands which were ill defended, enabled them to become rich. Hence they talked of old ocean in a more confiding mood. They invented a sea-god Ægir, who was really man's friend, old and very wise. Ran was his wife, who sometimes roused the fierce waves; but then Ægir would calm them again, moving as our picture shows him upon the face of the waters.

The boats of these northern sea-wanderers, or vikings as they called themselves, would have seemed very unsafe to us. The men had no compasses to guide them; and, though they used sails, they trusted mainly to oars. Thus they sat very close to the water as they rowed and must really have felt the huge waves as personal enemies rushing to overwhelm them.







THE LAST OF THE YNGLINGS

(King Ingiald and His Daughter Slain by the Vengeance of Ivar)

From a painting by Alexander Liezen-Mayers

ODIN'S descendants ruled as kings in Sweden down to the days of the seventh century after Christ. At that time there ruled in Upsala, Ingiald Illrada, or ill-ruler, known as the last of the "Ynglings," which was the name given to the kings descended from Odin. Ingiald's ancestors had lost most of their authority over Sweden. Ingiald won it all back by a savage massacre of all the lesser rulers. He invited them to a feast and then burned them to death in his hall at Upsala. After that he ravaged their territory.

Among the chieftains thus treacherously slain was the king of Scania or Scandinavia, a name then applied only to the province in the extreme south of Sweden. This king had a son, Ivar Widfadme, who vowed to avenge him. Ivar gathered about him all the infuriated folk whom Ingiald's murders and ravages had roused to desperation. With this terrible army, young Ivar attacked Upsala and again burned the great hall there. But this time the occupants who were burned within it were King Ingiald and his wicked daughter who had inspired and guided her father in his bloodthirsty career. Then Ivar became king in place of the slaughtered tyrant.

With Ivar begins the genuine history of Scandinavia, as opposed to the merely legendary remembrance of the Yngling kings.







THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Dear Sir:

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the proposed visit of Professor [Name] to the University of Chicago. It is my duty to inform you that the Faculty has voted to accept the proposal, and that the necessary arrangements have been made for his visit. The visit will take place during the month of [Month], and the Professor will be lodged in the [Building].

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
[Signature]





RAGNAR SEEKS ADVENTURES

(The Young King Ravages England's Coast in a Single Ship)

After a painting by the German artist, H. Prell

IN the early days it seems clear that Sweden was the chief seat of Scandinavian power. Slowly, however, her seafarers spread themselves abroad over Norway and Denmark. They penetrated Russia also and became kings there. They conquered northern Britain and much of Ireland. A typical viking of the times was Ragnar Lodbrok. His father had led the men of Norway in a great fight against those of Sweden and Denmark and had won the lordship of all the north. Ragnar succeeded to all the power of his father; but he cared nothing for this honor or its attendant duties. Instead of staying at home to govern his people and consolidate his power, Ragnar went off upon one viking cruise after another. He explored the coasts of England and Ireland. Sometimes he took many ships with him, sometimes he went almost alone. Always he came back loaded with plunder, rejoicing in the fierce fighting he had done.

At length in his old age there was one expedition from which he did not return. He was wrecked somewhere on the British Isles, with only two tiny ships of followers. His little band were overcome by the king of the region; and Ragnar was cast into a pit of snakes and died of their bites, defying his foes and chanting to the last the song of his own many victories. His people avenged his death most savagely. They praised him as a great hero, and never dreamed of blaming him for neglecting his kingdom.







THYRA, "THE ORNAMENT OF DENMARK"

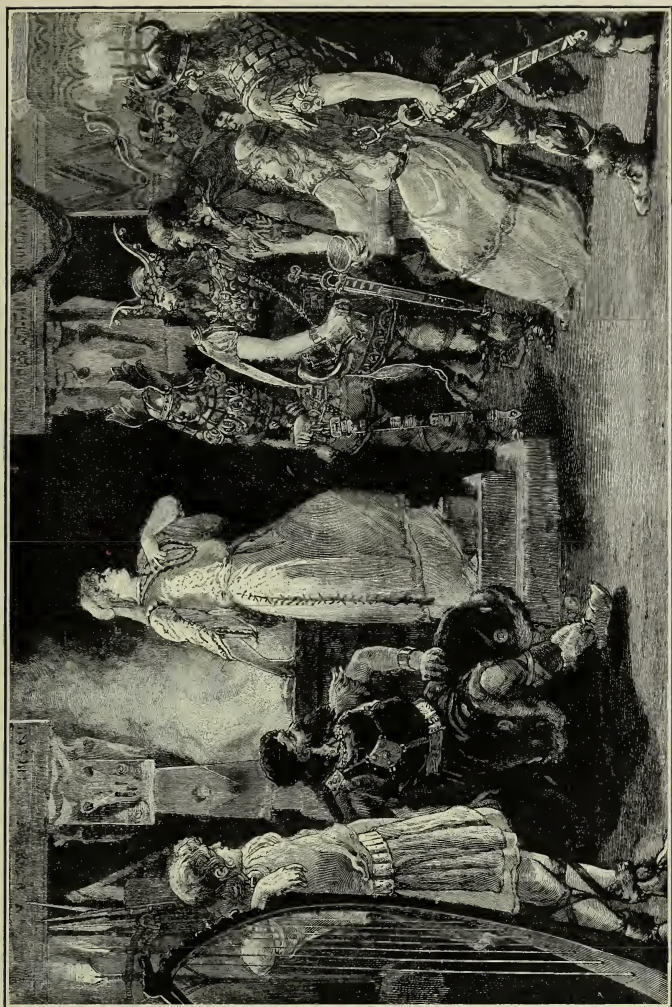
(Queen Thyra Rouses Her People to Build a Huge Wall of Defense)

Drawn from an ancient Danish print

AS the power of these men of the north spread southward, they came naturally into conflict with the Germans and Frenchmen. These had been joined in one great empire by Charlemagne. But even the mighty Charlemagne could not stop the ravages of the northmen, who appeared suddenly on his coasts with their tiny ships, plundering, and were gone long before he could march an army against them. The successors of Charlemagne began to take up the conflict seriously and sought to follow the northmen back to their frozen homes in the land of cold. The main figure in this struggle of the north to hold back the south was Gorm the Old, a king of Denmark. Gorm fought the advancing Germans in many battles; but slowly they pressed him back, and for the first time the northmen found themselves engaged in defensive warfare.

Gorm's queen was Thyra, a brave and most able woman. While her husband and all his warriors were away, Thyra encouraged the old men and the women who were left at home to build an enormous defensive wall. This remarkable structure, known as the "Danework," was erected about the year 900. It stretched from sea to sea across the base of the Danish peninsula shutting it off from Germany. Some traces of this huge Danework still remain.







HEATHEN AND CHRISTIAN

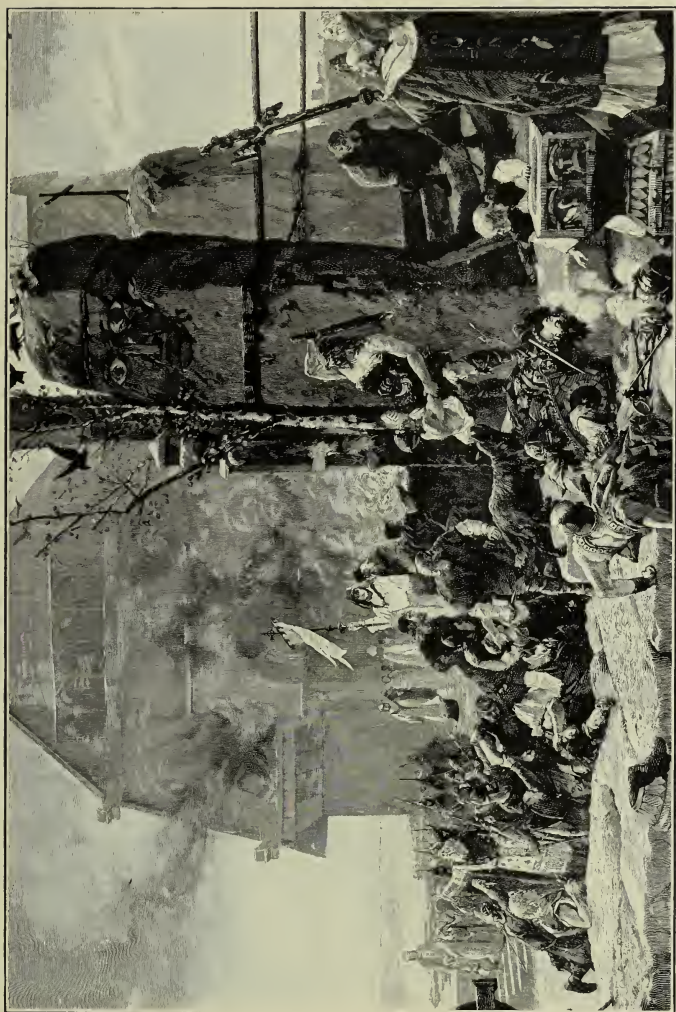
(Grettir, the Outlaw, Slays the Priests of Trondheim)

From a painting by the Scandinavian artist, M. Zeno Diemer

CHRISTIANITY made its way only very slowly among these wild warriors of the north. Its acceptance was really a long warfare of savage Heathens against sometimes equally savage Christians. Queen Thyra had been a Christian, but had found few followers among her people. The man who chiefly Christianized the north was the great king, Olaf Trygvesson. Olaf was a chief descended from the ancient stock of Odin. He had been exiled from Norway in his youth and had engaged in viking raids against England. There he had learned of Christianity and accepted it. Later he became king of Norway, then the most powerful of the Scandinavian kingdoms; and he resolved to compel his subjects to adopt his religious faith. He did this by force, marching over his kingdom, knocking down the idols in its sacred places and setting up Christian churches instead. Those who opposed him were slain or outlawed. Naturally after Olaf's death many of the outlaws sought to return and there was a revival of the old pagan worship.

A noted case of this was the one here pictured. The most celebrated of all the outlaws, Grettir, the hero of a Norse saga, or hero song, suddenly appeared at Trondheim, the chief religious center of the far north. Here he slew with his own hand all the Christian priests and restored for a moment the pagan worship of the past. Grettir, however, was soon slain. Christianity had grown too deeply rooted, and the idols of Odin and Thor disappeared before it.







POTABILITIES OF THE BATH IN AD

Published by the Government of the United States of America

Printed by the Government Printing Office

DURING the last few years, the public mind has been directed to the importance of the bath in the treatment of various diseases. The bath is a simple and effective means of treatment, and its use is recommended by the most eminent physicians. The bath is a simple and effective means of treatment, and its use is recommended by the most eminent physicians. The bath is a simple and effective means of treatment, and its use is recommended by the most eminent physicians.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DANISH FLAG

(Waldemar the Victorious is Guided by the Sacred Flag in a Crusade)

Drawn from an ancient Danish print

DENMARK, being the most southern of the Scandinavian kingdoms, was naturally the earliest to be drawn into the larger circle of European affairs. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries she was recognized as one of the chief states of the day. Under her celebrated king, Waldemar the Victorious, she rose to such power that the German emperor granted to Waldemar all the north German seacoast.

Waldemar led against the Esthonians, the heathen peoples east of the Baltic, an army which was probably the largest Denmark ever put into the field. The war was regarded as a holy one and the defeated Esthonians were compelled to accept Christianity. It was on this occasion that the Danes adopted their national flag, the "Danebrog," a white cross on a red background. As this was the commonly used crusading banner, they probably received it from the Pope. But Danish legend says the flag fell from the skies just as the Esthonians first attacked them; and that the standard led King Waldemar onward. The heathen fell away from it on every side and the king rode on to easy victory. At any rate, the Danes adopted the banner of the cross as their national flag; and the Esthonians surrendered to Waldemar, who thus became lord of all the southern shores of the Baltic.







THE DEAD QUEEN SPEAKS

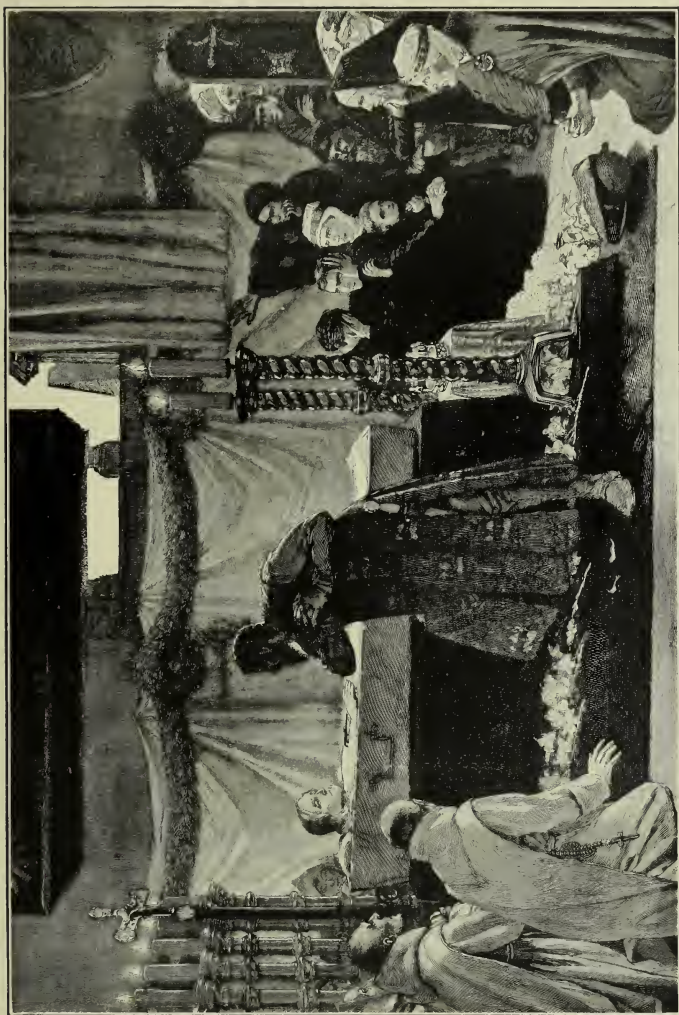
(Waldemar the Victorious by the Bier of His Wife)

From a painting by G. von Rosen

THE private life of Waldemar the Victorious was so sad as to destroy all joy that his national successes might have roused in him. He wedded for love's sake a Bohemian princess called Dagmar. She was beautiful and a saint, so full of charity that all her Danish subjects loved her from the moment she entered the kingdom. She was also devoted to her husband. But he was summoned away to a war with Germany; and when he returned in haste and eager triumph, it was to find his young wife dead. Legend tells that, as our picture shows, the passionately grieving husband so entreated his wife to speak to him that at length she raised her dead head from the coffin and rebuked him for thinking more of this world than the next.

Waldemar afterward married a Portuguese princess, Berengaria, who is represented as having been just the opposite of Dagmar in everything. This last wife is said to have deliberately led her aging lord into every kind of difficulty. It is certain that his life closed in defeat and disaster; and the sons of Berengaria snatched at their inheritance and fought over it, tearing the kingdom to fragments in their brutal greed.







DOWNFALL OF WALDEMAR

(His Subjects Attempt to Rescue Him From a German Dungeon)

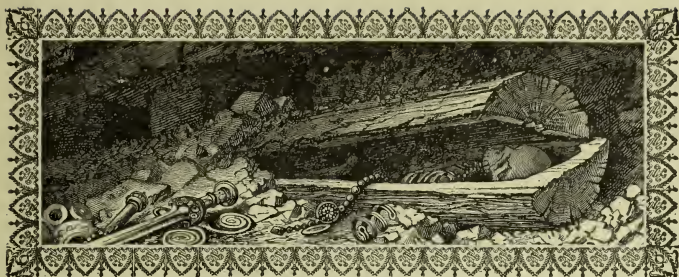
After a painting by the German artist, F. Grottenmeyer

WALDEMAR THE VICTORIOUS suffered not only in his family life, but also in his national career. Seldom has a reign which opened so splendidly as his, closed in so much of misfortune. His power had become so great that no man dared oppose him openly; but a clever plot was formed against him by some of the German nobles who had become his subjects. With a small but resolute force of men-at-arms they kidnapped the king and his eldest son, and carried them off as prisoners to a strong castle. Here they were held in close and cruel confinement.

At first no one knew what had become of the royal victims. A long and patient search at length disclosed what had happened, and King Waldemar's Danish subjects, who loved him dearly, gathered an army for his rescue. The subjugated German nobles, however, took part with his captors. A formal demand for his release was made by the Danes and refused by the Germans. Battle followed; but though the Danes were victors in the field, they could not storm the strong castle where the king was held. Ultimately an agreement was patched up by which Waldemar surrendered almost all his German territory in exchange for his liberty. Denmark never again reached to so much power.







PREHISTORIC RELICS IN SWEDEN

THE STORY OF THE GREATEST NATIONS

MODERN NATIONS—SCANDINAVIA

Chapter I

THE LEGENDARY DAYS OF ODIN

[*Authorities—General:* Geijer, "History of the Swedes"; Sinding, "History of Scandinavia"; Pufendorf, "Complete History of Sweden"; Boyesen, "History of Norway"; Dunham, "Denmark, Sweden and Norway"; Cronholm, "A History of Sweden"; Crichton and Wheaton, "Scandinavia"; Mallet, "History of Denmark"; Otte, "Scandinavian History." *Special:* Snorre Sturleson, "Heimskringla," "The Elder Edda"; "The Younger Edda"; Wheaton, "History of the Northmen"; Anderson, "Norse Mythology"; Mallet, "Northern Antiquities"; Nilsson, "Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia"; Montelius, "Civilization of Sweden in Ancient Times"; Worsaae, "Pre-history of the North."]



SCANDINAVIA is a name employed to-day to include all the peninsulas and islands of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Politically these regions are now divided into three separate countries, but they are occupied by a people of the same race; and as all Scandinavia has gone through much the same history and been frequently under the reign of the same sovereign, its story is often told as that of a single land.

The Scandinavians first became known to the more civilized south-world between the fourth and tenth centuries of the Christian era, when they grew to be the masters of the ocean, daring sea-robbers, pirates, who suddenly appeared and disappeared along the southern seacoasts like flashes of the destroying angel's wrath, leaving death and desolation behind. Huge fair-haired vikings they were, with winged helmets,

round shields, and coats of linked mail; giants of unequalled strength and unmeasured daring, about whom romance loves to cling.

Writers of the Southland called them vaguely and rather indiscriminately Northmen, though sometimes catching their more local names, as Danes or Jutes or Angeln. In their own books the Northmen speak of themselves as all one race though scattered over many districts, occupying in fact what they regarded as one of the three great divisions of the earth. They separated the world into Asia, the vague, far-off, populous mother-land; Europe, the warm and wealthy Southland; and "Greater Sweden," the world of snow and ice, in which they included not only Scandinavia, but northern Russia, and sometimes Great Britain with all its surrounding islands extending even to Iceland and the faint half-mythical region beyond.

So it is the story of the Northland we have here to tell. This in its way is perhaps older than any other European tale. In Scandinavia we find no sudden, sharp break of a new-coming race driving out the old. The inhabitants to-day are apparently the descendants of those who dwelt there in the very earliest epoch that we can trace. The evidence of Scandinavian grave-mounds and other prehistoric relics seems to be that, without change of race, the land has seen a steady development extending back through the iron age and the bronze age to that far-off age of stone when men were of closest kin to the beasts and met them in not unequal warfare. The many Northern legends that deal with dragons are probably not inventions, but vague recollections of those monstrous crawling lizards which science now assures us once dwelt on earth.

Indeed, scientific students are to-day discussing a new theory which points to the dismal shores of the Baltic Sea as being the original home of the whole mighty Aryan race, from which some of their tribes wandered off to Asia at an epoch too distant to be dated. The travellers retained always a vague recollection of, perhaps even a communication with, their earlier home, and after many centuries began back toward it that clearer movement of the Aryans, in which coming from the East they peopled Greece and Italy, Gaul and Germany.

Both philology and archæology offer arguments in favor of this theory, but its strongest evidence to the unscientific mind lies rather in the character of the ancient Northmen themselves. It is from such men and from long ages in such a land, that we would expect the Aryan characteristics to develop. Fairness of color, huge size and strength of limb, slowness in maturing, combined with length of life, steady endurance and calm, shrewd alertness in the face of danger, the joy of strife yet with a touch of kindness toward all feebler life, these are the traits of the Aryan as balanced against the Semite or Turanian, and these were in their fullest measure the traits of the Scandinavian. They are the qualities of the semi-arctic North with its long, hard winters and the brief, sweet respite of its summer months.

From the legends of Scandinavia we can, however, gather no clear trace of any such southward movement and return. Their earliest tale is of Odin and the Asa-folk. So confused a figure is Odin, treated sometimes as a god, sometimes as a man, that it is not easy to draw any definite historic outline of him—unless we accept the suggestion that there were two Odins, the early god and a later man who assumed the name. The man Odin, says the Yngling saga, came from the south, perhaps Asia, with his people the Asa-folk, and settled in central Sweden. Here he met an already existing race of Gotas or Goths and after many a trial of strength and wisdom with their king Gytha, Odin and his followers settled amicably in the land. The two races united and they, or Odin's more immediate followers, became known as Svea-folk or Swedes.

Another race was also encountered by Odin. These were the ancestors of the Lapps and Finns, and are represented in the sagas as being physically feeble but dealers in treachery and magic. Elsewhere however, they are called Jotuns or giants and declared to be the original owners of the land. Against them Odin warred successfully and drove them into the farthest north. He became not only a conqueror but an all-wise teacher, the inventor of *runes* or written words, and the founder of a priesthood with its chief temple at Upsala (the high halls), which is still the centre of Swedish learning. Hence our very earliest record of the North is of Sweden and of its division into three districts which exist there to-day, Gothland, Svealand, and Nordland, the region of the wandering Lapps.

Odin died and his body was doubtless placed in his favorite war-boat, which was set afire and with sail full spread to the blast, bore him off alone across the stormy waters of the Baltic. Such were the obsequies of many a later chief, and the legend soon grew up among the followers of Odin that he was not dead, but had only left them for a time to visit his kindred in the Asa-land. He was deified by his people, or perhaps there had been a previous deity of the name whom the adventurer had dared impersonate. Odin is the same as Woden, the one-eyed, the chief god of all the Teutonic races. Friga, the goddess of peace, is his wife, and possibly represents a northern princess, by marrying whom King Odin secured peace and lands for himself and followers.

Yet more dimly ancient in the Scandinavian mythology, perhaps supplanted by the newer gods, was Thor, the war-spirit, the thunderer. There was also Ægir, god of the sea, with his dread wife Ran, the storm-goddess. She and her servants, the waves, hate and seek to destroy all men who dare invade their realm; but Ægir, the friend of man, guides him across the fiercest waters to wealth and glory. To these early Scandinavians all nature was alive around them, and it is probable that the mass of Teutonic legends about Woden, Baldur the sun-god, and the others, originated in the far North. The more famous of these myths have been already told in our story of the Germans.

After the death of Odin or his return to Asa-land, his descendants, known as the Ynglings from his grandson Yngve, ruled over the Swedes. Gradually their power decreased, or their people grew too numerous and too widely scattered over the almost impassable wilds to submit to a single local ruler. Scandinavia became the seat of dozens of little settlements, each with its own *sma-king* or small king whose rule amounted to no more than that of a leader voluntarily followed in time of trouble.

Against the raids of these *sma-kings* the Yngling rulers or high priests had often to defend themselves by strength of arm. Any divinity that may have hedged them in the early days, disappeared with the centuries; and the last of the Ynglings, Ingiald Illrada (ill-ruler), was finally destroyed and his family driven from Upsala by a coalition of these petty chiefs. The high halls of the Yngling settlement continued to be distinguished above others only by a vague religious rank.

The tale of Ingiald's expulsion lies on the vague borderland betwixt myth and legend. On his father's death Ingiald invited to a feast all the chiefs of the nearer districts. According to custom, he sat humbly at their feet, not assuming the royal seat and rank until his father's funeral should be ended. Then rising among his guests to make the customary "funeral vow," Ingiald vowed to do away with all "*sma-kings*" whatsoever and to rule alone over the Swedes as his ancestors had done. In fulfillment of this pious oath, he immediately burned the house above the heads of his assembled victims. Then with fire and sword he marched against such other lords as he could reach.

Among the slain was the king of Scania, or Scandinavia, a name then restricted to the extreme southern part of modern Sweden. This king's son, Ivar Widfadme, gathered a small but infuriated army of his subjects, and with grim purpose started on the long march northward. His force increased like a snowball as it swept onward over the desolate and devastated lands; and when at last the avengers reached the high halls of Upsala, their strength had grown to be irresistible. Ingiald saw that his doom had come. The hall which he had burned above his rivals, had been replaced by a new and more gorgeous dwelling. With his own hand he now set fire to this; and surrounded by his faithful followers, holding in his arms the daughter who had aided him in all his plots, he perished in his turn amid the flames (A. D. 623).

Young Ivar was thus the first to supplant the Ynglings and drive them wholly from their vague remnant of overlordship in the north. He was the chief ruler in Scania and perhaps the island and peninsula beyond it, the land now known as Denmark; so that the tale seems to preserve some first vague triumph of the southern regions over the northern. Ivar is reckoned the first great king of Denmark, and is said to have ruled not only over all Scandinavia, but over the Saxons and Northumbrians.



SWRWN FORKBEARD

Chapter II

THE VIKING AGE AND CANUTE THE GREAT

[*Special Authorities*: Carlyle, "Early Kings of Norway"; Adam of Bremen, "Historia Ecclesiastica"; Du Chaillu, "The Viking Age"; Keary, "The Vikings in Western Christendom"; "Saxon Chronicle"; Sidgwick, "Story of Norway"; Storm, "Pages of Early Danish History."]



AFTER Ivar Widfadme, we enter on the second period of Scandinavian story. The purely mythical age gives place to one dimly historic, of which several sagas and other records exist, though their chronology is confused and contradictory, each tale, as is natural, magnifying its local hero.

Of the home life of the Northmen of this time we know but little, though they were probably quite as civilized in their way as any of the kindred tribes to the south of them, even the half-Romanized Franks. In seamanship the Northmen acquired a skill and daring truly remarkable. Odin, inventor or introducer of so many customs, was perhaps the first to teach his people that attacks by sea were far more easy and effective than toilsome marches and assaults by land. The myths ascribe to him a magic boat in which he and his men could be carried anywhere. Doubtless this means that they appeared suddenly and unheralded along the little fjords, to the consternation of their enemies.

The generations that followed Odin became shipbuilders, and, after harrying one another's homesteads and learning all the seamanship they might along the Baltic shores, they sailed through the channels to the great ocean without, and dared its wrath. Their settlements spread up the Norwegian coast; their ships

ventured over to Scotland and even to Ireland beyond. They also began the conquest of England and plundered the shores of France.

A century or so after Ivar's time, the Northmen had become so numerous at home that they seemed like a flood pouring out to overflow the earth. Most of what we know of their exploits comes from the monkish chroniclers of the lands they ravaged; and it is but natural that to their terrified victims these fierce pagan marauders should have appeared everything that was savage, merciless and fiendish in the form of men. In truth, however, they seem to have compared most favorably with other conquerors. Each land that submitted to their sway quickly became prosperous and progressive, and assumed for a time the intellectual leadership of the European world. Their chief conquests were of England, Normandy, and southern Italy. But we hear also of their dominion over Russia and their assaults upon Paris and Orleans. Their ships ravaged the Mediterranean, and even Constantinople yielded to their arms.

This remarkable outpouring of warriors from the North continued through more than six hundred years, from the beginning of the fifth century or even earlier, down to about 1100 A. D. Moreover during all this period there were repeated bloody wars between rival kings at home. Such prodigal expenditure of life could not continue forever, and there came a time when the Northland collapsed with weakness and exhaustion. Its sons had been given to the world, and the once populous coasts of Scandinavia sank back into an almost deserted wilderness.

The various expeditions of this period belong to the history of the lands in which the conquerors settled. The strife between the kings at home presents only a wearisome sameness of bloodshed, over which we need not linger. Ivar was succeeded in all his dominions by his grandson Harald Hildetand, who is a positive and impressive historical figure, and who, coming to the throne a mere lad, ruled for the almost incredible period of four-score and eight years (647-735). He extended the vague empire he had received, by further conquests in the East and South, and he put down his turbulent vassals or *sma-kings* with an iron hand.

Harald's death is the theme of the great epic war-song of the North, the Scandinavian "Siege of Troy." In his extreme old age the celebrated chieftain was possessed of the true Norse desire to die in battle; for only those thus slain were borne at once to Odin's banquet-hall in Valhalla. To die peaceably in bed was well-nigh a disgrace. Yet looking forth over the Northern world, Harald could see no king remaining who might oppose him in war. He therefore deliberately raised a quarrel with his nephew, Sigurd Ring, his regent over Norway.

Sigurd, driven to defiance, gathered his fleets and advanced southward against Denmark. With him came every *sma-king* who in all the long years of Harald's reign had formed a grievance, every earl whom the monarch's savagery had ever offended. Their ships covered the ocean; the saga sings of their twenty-five

hundred sail. The invaders landed in Scania, mooring their fleet at the mouth of the River Braa. Harald hearing this, eagerly marshalled his army, and met the enemy in the battle of Bravalla, the most terrific combat of the North.

Here the god Odin appeared for the last time among men. Mounting into Harald's chariot, he urged the horses of the aged king into the midst of the foe. Harald, recognizing his charioteer, besought him for this one more glorious victory; but Odin pointed out that young Sigurd had too well learned the art of war and had ranged his men in that irresistible wedge shape by which Harald had himself won all his battles. At this the aged king grew desperate. Dashing madly amidst the foe, he slew all who opposed him, dealing his great blows with resistless power. No man could stand against him, until at length Odin, to stay the interminable slaughter, raised his own weapon and smote Harald down. Then Sigurd, lamenting that such a hero must die, built a vast burial-mound, burned his uncle's body with high honors, and succeeded him in his domains. The lordship of all Scandinavia thus passed from Denmark to the Norwegians (735).

The next ruler over the North—dates remain vague and events uncertain—was Sigurd's son, Ragnar Lodbrok (leather-breeches), of whom also the sagas have many deeds to tell. His odd surname was earned in youth, in the days of wooing. There was a maiden so famed for beauty that her father, to protect her and guard his home, filled its fore-court with hissing poison-snakes. No man dared approach, and the maiden languished. But Ragnar, seeing her fair face, wrapped leather thongs around his legs, and so day after day strode unharmed amid the adders, winning for himself a bride and a name.

Like his father, and indeed all his race, Ragnar thought far less of welding and governing the turbulent world of which he was called the ruler, than he did of proving his own individual prowess. He wandered forth on many a wild viking cruise. Finally, sailing away with only two ships, he was wrecked on the English or perhaps the Irish coast, and his forces were overpowered by those of Ælla, the king who reigned there. Ragnar, refusing to reveal himself, was cast into a pit of snakes and died of their bites, chanting a wild Norse death-song which is still preserved.

"There will be grim doings here," said Ragnar, "when the young cubs learn what has happened to the old bear."

When his sons feasting in Norway heard the tale, they sped at once to Ælla's land and took fierce vengeance upon him and all his people. They made a "spread-eagle" of him, as the cruel torture was called, hewing his ribs from the backbone one by one. Then these sons divided the domains of Ragnar among themselves, and thus the North was once more headless, its forces scattered among many petty rulers.

Another period of confusion follows. There was a king in Denmark, perhaps

a grandson of Ragnar, who quarrelled with Charlemagne. This appears to have been the first time that it dawned upon the Northmen that there was, somewhere in the Southland, a power so organized and concentrated as to be mightier than their own. Even then it was the distance and the wilderness that restrained them from assault rather than the troops of Charlemagne. Gottrik, a Danish or Jutish king, attempted to surprise and capture the Emperor in his capital at Aachen. The effort failed, but the Frankish ruler made peace with the Danes as equals. No demand was made of them, as of the nearer tribes, that they should adopt Christianity, the symbol of alliance and submission to the Franks. Important as it must have seemed to all the Southland that these wild, pagan ravagers should learn the softer faith, Charlemagne lacked the power to compel them to accept it.

Christianity first penetrated into Scandinavia during the time of Charlemagne's successor, Louis the Pious. In the monkish chronicles, under the year 826, the entry is made with much detail and elaboration, how Harald Klak, a king in Jutland, having been expelled from his possessions, came with his wife and all his followers sailing in a hundred ships to the court of Louis at Ingelheim. Doubtless his purpose was to seek aid, for he adopted Christianity and was baptized with gorgeous ceremony. Then he returned to Jutland accompanied by many Franks, and temporarily reconquered some portion of his kingdom.

In Harald's train a number of Christian priests entered Jutland, headed by Anskar or Anscarius, "the Apostle of the North." A year or two later Harald was again driven from his throne and sank into permanent exile as duke of a Frankish province conferred on him by the pious Emperor. At this second expulsion of their protector, the priests fled also; but Anskar, their chief, soon accepted an invitation to return to Scandinavia under humbler auspices.

Some Swedish merchant sailors who had adopted the new faith, offered to convey him to their own distant capital. On the voyage they were attacked by pirates and lost most of their possessions. They were shipwrecked also, and only after sore experience of the dangers of the sea did the devoted teacher reach his destination. There the Swedish king, Bjorn, consented to the expounding of the new doctrines, and finally became himself a convert. But on Bjorn's death the old animosity against Christianity blazed up again, and once more Anskar had to flee for his life. On the whole he spent nigh forty years in the Northland with little permanent result. A rougher hand than his was needed for the mastering of this rugged race.

Meanwhile, the hundred little Scandinavian kingdoms were assuming more definite outlines, becoming reduced in number, and fixed into the three established States which we know to-day. Sweden had continued as a single united kingdom from the days of Ragnar Lodbrok, and she still traces back her successor

of sovereigns to that wild viking in unbroken if not wholly reliable records of descent. In Norway, apparently grown by this time the most populous and powerful region of the North, there appeared another conqueror. This was Harald Haarfagr, or Harald the Fair-haired, said to be sprung from the stock of the ancient Yagling rulers of Upsala. Harald was sma-king over a little Norwegian district when in early youth he sent to ask the hand of Gyda, a neighboring princess. She returned word that she would wed him when he was a real king, like Eric of Sweden or Gorm of the Danes. Harald's counsellors regarded this as an insult and urged him to seize the maid by force; but the youthful warrior accepted the answer in another light, declared that Gyda was right and vowed never to cut nor comb his hair until he had reasserted his ancient birthright and become lord over all of Norway.

Then followed battles and surprises and innumerable stratagems of statecraft through all of which Harald fought and plotted onward toward his goal. Finally in 875 there was a last, celebrated sea-fight in Hafurs (now Stavanger) Fjord, in which all the little kings and earls who still dared oppose Harald were completely overthrown. Having accomplished his vow, the victor cut the long, matted yellow hair which had given him his title "Fair-hair," and wedded the beautiful Gyda who had waited for him so long. The romance of the tale is a little injured, however, by the fact that the hero had in the interval married another woman, and Gyda was only his second or lesser wife.

This union of Norway under Harald caused great changes in the land. He did away completely with the old system of sma-kings, and established his own adherents as earls or *jarls* over the various districts. He enforced the laws, some old, some of his own proclamation, against duelling and robbery. He even—and this was felt by his people as the most unreasonable and unjust of his oppressions—forbade the viking raids upon other districts. If these time-honored enjoyments were to be given up, most Norwegians of noble birth felt that existence would be no longer a pleasure. They disobeyed the king openly, and when he proceeded to punish them, they left the land in great numbers.

This, the most noted exodus of all those by which the North was depleted of its strength, took place about the years 874 and 885. At the later date the gigantic Rollo or Rolf the Ganger (goer or walker) was exiled, and going "a-viking" into France, conquered Normandy and became its duke. In 874, Iceland was settled by other exiles, who preferred the harshness of its climate to the severities of King Harald. Ireland also was colonized. Norway, half depopulated, became a land almost without an hereditary nobility, a land of peasants who ruled their king perhaps as much as he ruled them.

When Harald had grown old, he divided his kingdom among his sons (933), and there was more civil war extending over generations. At last one of the few

remaining nobles, Earl Hakon or Hakon Jarl, drove all the surviving descendants of Harald from the country, and assumed the throne himself. After many years his tyranny roused the peasants to revolt, and he had just hidden himself with a single servant in a secret den beneath a pigstye, when Olaf Trygvesson, the last of the house of Harald, appeared unexpectedly upon the scene.

Olaf was another of Norway's noted kings. He had already gained fame as a viking, had been in Italy, ravaged England, joined the Danish prince, Sweyn, in taking toll of London, and even, according to legend, had wedded an English princess. Olaf, having determined to reassert his right to his ancestors' domain and coming so opportunely upon the assembled peasants, received by acclamation the crown for which he had meant to fight.

Through all the ceremony Jarl Hakon listened from the pigstye, not daring to make the slightest sound lest he be discovered, afraid even to sleep lest his companion betray him. It is one of the grim pictures of Norwegian history, those two men crouching there through all the long day and longer night, each suspicious, neither daring to attack the other, because of the noise and discovery and death that would follow. The servant repeatedly assured his master of his loyalty, and at last Hakon was exhausted and slept. Then the thrall killed him and came out to Olaf with the severed head for his reward. Olaf slew the wretch for his faithlessness.

Olaf Trygvesson, through his descent from Harald Haarfagr, came from the ancient stock of the Ynglings, the priest kings of Upsala. He was the last of his race, and, like Odin its originator, Olaf also became the founder of a new religion in the North. Somewhere in his wild viking life he had become a Christian—though the conversion does not seem to have produced much of the expected softening effect. He was sincere, however, at least to the extent of being determined to Christianize Norway at whatever cost. Another king had made such an attempt, and perished. Olaf was more successful. For five years he and his followers traversed the land attending the assemblies or *things* of the peasants, smiting down their images of Thor with his great battle-axe, and convincing them in this rough fashion of the helplessness of their gods. More than once he and his men had to do battle for their lives. But in the end Norway was Christianized and Olaf stood forth a shining conqueror, the mightiest monarch of the North, holding his people firmly as no other could.

His arrogance, rising with his fortunes, brought him to disaster. He proposed marriage to the dowager queen of Sweden but stipulated that she should turn Christian. When she refused, he struck her in the face and repudiated her with scorning. So Sweden was roused against him. Then he insisted on marrying the sister of his old comrade Sweyn, the Danish king, though the union was against Sweyn's wishes. Worse still according to the Norse view, Olaf quarrelled with

the Jomsburg vikings, a terrible horde who had banded together in a stronghold on the south shore of the Baltic, and were become strong as a kingdom. All these forces allied themselves with certain discontented earls of Olaf's who clung secretly to their heathen faith. Olaf, betrayed and caught unexpectedly among the fleets of his foemen, fought at the head of a few faithful ships, the last great sea-fight of Norse history. With his own "long dragon" he attacked the Swedes and Danes and put them to flight. But his exhausted forces were then set upon by their own countrymen and by the Jomsbergers. In the end Olaf, seeing all his followers stricken down and finding that his dulled sword could no longer bite, raised his glistening shield above him and leaped overboard. He was seen no more of men, but his countrymen long cherished a belief that he would some day return and lead them again to victory.

The supremacy of the North, thus lost to Norway, was again assumed by Denmark. Here, about a century before Olaf's time, Gorm the Old had suppressed the last of the scattered sma-kings and built up a strong and wealthy kingdom. Gorm was one of the leaders of the immense viking horde that besieged Paris in 884. He had wedded Thyra, "the ornament of Denmark," daughter or perhaps other relative of that Harald Klak who had vainly attempted to introduce Christianity into Jutland. Gorm proved a bitter foe to his wife's faith, harried it out of Denmark and made many a viking raid against its home-lands to the southward.

The Saxons had been compelled by Charlemagne to accept the new faith; Gorm, marching his wild warriors into their land, attempted to force its return to the ancient pagan worship. This ill-advised bit of proselyting brought him into conflict with another great Emperor, Henry the Fowler, who defeated the Danish monarch and compelled him to permit the preaching of Christianity even in Denmark itself.

Meanwhile the wiser and kindlier Thyra was attempting to make life happier and milder among the Danes at home. While Gorm thought of attack, she thought of defense. During one of Gorm's viking absences, Thyra finding the land left almost defenseless, gathered her counsellors and proposed the building of a huge protective wall, extending across the base of the Danish peninsula. The people set to work with enthusiasm and erected the "Dane-work," seventy feet high, the remains of which may still be seen traversing Schleswig from sea to sea. Even the stubborn Gorm approved her efforts and became lenient to her faith. Thyra's seems to have been the first truly softening influence upon the North.

Massive as was the Dane-work, it could not long hold back the tide of the fast-rising German power. In the reign of Gorm's son Harald Bluetooth, the Emperor Otto II defeated the Danes, demolished their wall and, marching his forces the whole length of their peninsula, hurled his spear into the straits beyond, as an emblem of sovereignty over the farthest seas. He compelled Bluetooth to accept

Christianity, thus rousing against that unfortunate king a rebellion headed by his own son Sweyn Forkbeard.

Bluetooth was slain (985), and Sweyn ascending to the throne became in his turn a noted conqueror. Of his victory over Olaf Trygvesson, we have already heard, and it would seem he must have played a better part in the great sea-fight than the Norse sagas will allow, for he was thereafter the acknowledged overlord of Norway as well as Denmark. England too was added to his domain. There had been some vague English conquest under Gorm, probably little more than a harrying followed by the usual payment of ransom money and a possible agreement to continue a regular tribute, which however was never collected. Sweyn in his early days found this sufficient pretext for a raid upon the "rebellious province," and had joined Olaf Trygvesson, in their oft-told attack on London.

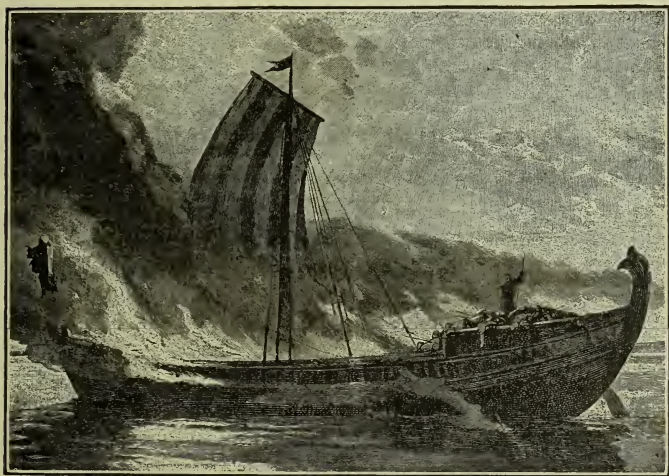
Afterward, Sweyn being overbusy with his quarrels at home, the English king, unhappy Æthelred the Unready, by a sudden plot had all the Danes in England slain (1002). This brought Sweyn back to the land bent on vengeance and more lasting conquest. A man of rather modern type was this Sweyn, politic and seeking power rather than mere personal renown as fighter and killer. For twelve years he remained in England, fully accepted as its king, and on his death in 1014, he was succeeded there as well as in Denmark and Norway by his son Canute, or Knut, the Great.

Canute was but a lad, and he had to prove himself in many battles before he made good his claim to all his father's lands. English history speaks largely of him, for England was his favorite habitation, and he sent Englishmen to teach their arts and learning to the Danes. His people boasted that he was lord of six kingdoms, for in addition to Denmark and England he was overlord of both Norway and Sweden, and ruled Scotland, and also Cumberland, the home of the ancient Britons or Welsh. Canute unquestionably was a very remarkable man, not only as a warrior but as a lawgiver and lover of the kindlier side of life. Most important of all, he became converted to Christianity; and under his vigorous direction and command the faith was at last permanently established throughout Denmark and southern Norway.

In the remoter regions of the North the ancient Odin-worship still struggled to reassert itself against the milder faith of the "white Christ." Men swore devotion to one or the other God, as they would have sworn to follow an earthly sovereign. Norse legend abounds with tales similar to that of the outlaw Grettir, who in 1015 appeared suddenly at Trondheim and slew the Christian priests and worshippers before their altar.

When Canute died (1035), the power of Denmark faded. Two of his sons ruled England, but they failed to uphold their position as lords of Scandinavia. The entire region began to feel the effects of the interminable bloodshed. The

civil wars were still intermingled with wild viking raids, but these were the final and exhaustive efforts of the North. Harald of Norway sought to reconquer England, and was slain by the Saxon king Harold at Stamford Bridge (1066). In the same year the Norman descendants of Rolf the Ganger did what the other Norwegians had failed in—they conquered Saxon England at Hastings. Robert Guiscard made himself lord of Sicily. Sigurd, a later king of Norway, headed a crusade. Each of these expeditions left the Northland emptier than before. In 1069, Sweyn of Denmark, a nephew of Canute the Great, sent a fleet of two hundred and forty sail against England, to compel the homage and submission which its new ruler, William of Normandy, seems to have half promised him. The fleet was ignominiously defeated, and only a fragment of it escaped to Denmark. The survivors found Scandinavia almost a desert; the teeming population had expatriated itself at last. Moreover the feeble remnant who still clung to their ancient hearths were learning a milder creed, and began of their own accord to prefer a milder life. The viking days were over.



THE LAST CRUISE OF RAGNAR LODBROK



SETTING OUT OF THE ESTHONIAN CRUSADE

Chapter III

POWER OF DENMARK UNDER THE THREE WALDEMAR

[*Special Authorities*: Allen, "History of Denmark"; Chronicle of Arnold of Lubeck; Schaefer, "The Hanseatic League and King Waldemar"; Munch, "History of the Norsemen"; Saxo Grammaticus, "Danish History" (translated by O. Elton, London).]



THE decadence of the power of Scandinavia may be reckoned from the death of Canute the Great, founder of Christianity in the North. Within a generation after came the two unsuccessful attempts of the Norse Harald and Danish Sweyn to reconquer England; and then for more than a century there is no Northland triumph to record, no great effort even, but only darkness, suffering, and decay.

Sweden, the most remote and least civilized of the three countries, drifted back almost if not wholly into paganism. Norway was swept by repeated civil wars. It was only in Denmark that events occurred of sufficient note to enter into our narrative. Denmark, so recently the most powerful state of the North, became for a time the weakest and the most desolate of all. The primal cause of this downfall was, of course, the depopulation of the land. But a second and none the less notable cause lay, not in Christianity itself, but in the evils which followed in its train.

As the communication between the North, especially Denmark, and the rest of Europe became closer, the whole social system of the more southern lands began to impress itself upon Scandinavia. European society was founded upon feudalism; and feudalism maintained the power of the noble, the helplessness

of the peasant. Now the Northland peasants were not helpless, they were the strength of the land; and when the Danish kings began taxing them, the Danish lords insulting them, and foreign-born bishops, strangers to the land, began exacting a heavy church tithe, whether a man wished to offer it or no—when these evils fell upon the peasants, they revolted. There was constant tumult. Kings were elected and deposed, imprisoned and murdered along with lesser men; provinces separated from the central state; there were years when the soil and its crops were utterly neglected. Famine became so widespread that one of the Danish kings was known as Olaf “Hunger.” Hunger was king.

The reign of that grim monarch undermined the resistance of the peasantry as no other could. Moreover, when the Northmen themselves abandoned pirating as a livelihood, it was taken up by those who had been their pupils, the still uncivilized heathen races to the east of the Baltic, especially the Wends. These pagan freebooters ravaged Scandinavia even as the Scandinavians had ravaged France and England. The Northmen in their period of weakness suffered all that they had once inflicted upon others. Especially was this true of Denmark, the most southern and most civilized of the regions. Its long stretches of marshy coast lay waste and uninhabited. No man dared dwell there, within reach of the plunderers. All fled to the heart of the country or entrenched themselves in the fortified seacoast towns.

So grew up the cities, the havens. Denmark, be it remembered, still included at this time not only its present peninsula of Jutland and the surrounding islands, but also Scania, or what is now the southern point of Sweden. Indeed, the Danish capital itself had been at Lund in Scania. But Lund now began to decay and the coast havens to become populous in its place, especially Copenhagen (*køpjes havn*), the merchants’ haven, afterward the capital.

The first gleam of light across the darkness came in the times of Waldemar I, the Great, one of the three noteworthy Waldemars who held the Danish throne. Under this monarch’s reign (1157–1182) opened the third and final period of Denmark’s greatness. The first had been under Ivar Widfadme and his descendants through Ragnar Lodbrok. The second extended from the reign of Gorm the Old to that of Sweyn Forkbeard and Canute the Great, ruler of six kingdoms. The third began with Waldemar the Great.

Before coming to the throne, Waldemar had established himself as the favorite of the nation. Although a member of the royal house at a period when each of its descendants was fighting to seize the crown, Waldemar made no effort to gain the prize for himself, but strove only to end the civil war and ameliorate the miserable condition of the exhausted people. By so doing he became while still a youth the most trusted and best loved man in Denmark. One of the contestants for the throne sought the aid of the great German Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa,

and accepted Denmark from him as a fief of the Empire. Another, carrying subservience still further, assumed the German costume and German manners. At length it was agreed, with Barbarossa's consent, that Denmark should be divided into three parts and shared among those two unworthy rivals and Waldemar.

The people consented joyously to this arrangement. It might mean the downfall of Denmark, but it promised at least peace. Evil ambition however, was not yet content. Even at the feast held in celebration of the agreement of peace, the king whose castle had been chosen for the festivities, attempted the assassination of his two rivals. One fell, but the other, Waldemar, defended himself valiantly, and holding his assailants in check, escaped from the castle in heroic style.

The civil war recommenced. But now Waldemar claimed for himself the sovereignty of the entire nation, and soon drew all the people to his side. His murderous foe was defeated and slain. Waldemar, to escape an exhaustive foreign war, acknowledged himself and his kingdom subject to the German Emperor. Then he set to work to restore prosperity to his desolate and almost deserted land.

Waldemar is noted as a lawmaker. The body of laws authorized if not actually composed by him, long remained the basis of Danish government. The provisions are simple and direct, such laws as every man could understand, and all honest men would wish to follow.

In his own day, however, Waldemar was most noted as the conqueror of the pagan Wends. Determined to rescue his country from their piracy, he built strongholds along all the island channels, and in each fortress placed a band of seamen with ships ready to sally out against any suspicious boat that passed. Most important of these forts, with the town that sprang up around it, was Copenhagen, then called Axelborg from Axel Hvide, the fosterbrother and most trusted servant of the king. Axel, better known to later generations as Bishop Absalon, made his burgh famous throughout the North by the ever-increasing line of pirate heads which rotted on the summit of its walls.

Waldemar and his warlike bishop brother led in all more than twenty expeditions against the Wends, several of the attacks rising to the length and importance of regular campaigns. Finally the pirates were besieged in their huge and apparently impregnable citadel, Arkona, on the island of Rugen. Raised high on a precipitous hill and defended by strong walls, this pirate city had long resisted all assault; but Waldemar captured it by stratagem. His soldiers secretly stuffed the hollows of the rocky bank with dry wood and brush, to which they set fire, and soon the roaring flames covered the whole face of the cliff, and rushing upward consumed the wooden walls upon the summit. Following the flames came the soldiers of Waldemar, who easily rushed over the defenses from which the Wends had already been driven by the terrific heat of the fire.

The defeated pirates submitted; and for two whole days Axel and Waldemar

maintained their weary place upon the judgment altar, the bishop baptizing or the king condemning, until all the pirates had accepted Christianity. Then the great four-headed idol of the city was solemnly burned in the public square. As no avenging bolt fell upon the destroyers, the Wends concluded that their god was indeed powerless—and they remained Christians.

In similar fashion Waldemar extended his power over many other Wendish tribes, and won for Denmark a security of peace under which the land prospered greatly. Dying when fifty-one, Waldemar left a kingdom as strong and united as his accession had found it feeble and divided. Never was monarch so mourned by his people. Even the stern bishop Absalon was overcome, and could not for tears pronounce the burial service at the hero's grave.

When the German Emperor Barbarossa sent to King Canute VI, Waldemar's son and successor, calling on him to acknowledge himself in his turn a vassal of the empire, and to do homage for his kingdom as a fief, Canute returned defiant word that if Denmark belonged to the Emperor he had better send some one there strong enough to take it. This was an open denial of vassalage; but so powerful had Denmark grown that the Emperor let the haughty message pass unchallenged.

Canute extended the Wendish conquests of his father, capturing Pomerania and Mecklenburg, and in his triumph, he assumed the title "King of the Wends." Canute's sister Ingeborg married Philip Augustus, the great king of France; and Denmark assumed in many ways the position of a leading European state. Danish students were numerous in Paris. Old chronicles speak of the rapid improvement of the land, its wealth, its commerce, its devotion to the arts, the military renown of its leaders, especially the aged bishop Absalon. Two of the greatest German cities, Lubeck and Hamburg, did homage to the King of Denmark; and Canute ruled over wider territories than any of his predecessors since the time of his namesake, Canute the Great.

Following Canute VI upon the throne, came his brother and chief supporter, Waldemar II, called the Victorious (1202-1241). It is illustrative of the encroachment of feudalism upon Danish life and of the decay of the stalwart Danish peasantry, that Waldemar received his nomination to the crown not from the peasants but from the nobles of the duchies and provinces in northern Germany, of which he had become master during his brother's reign. These nobles, having already accepted Waldemar as their overlord, now eagerly evaded his too close supervision, by raising him to the Danish throne. The choice was natural and fitting, and the Danes readily acquiesced in it.

Waldemar's victories were obtained mainly over the Esthonians, the heathen races occupying the east shores of the Baltic where Narva and St. Petersburg now stand. He led against them what statisticians have reckoned the largest fleet and

army ever sent out from Denmark, probably sixty thousand men. The Esthonians were overwhelmed, and baptized by wholesale (1219).

This conquest marks the height of Denmark's power, the widest spread of her dominion. To one of the Esthonian battles is ascribed the origin of the Danish flag of to-day, the white cross on a red ground. As the white cross was the emblem of the Crusaders, it seems probable that this flag was sent to King Waldemar by the Pope in token of approval of his religious war or crusade against the powerful pagans of the North. Danish legend, however, represents the flag as falling from heaven in the midst of a great battle, when the Christian forces had been surprised by the heathen, their royal standard captured, and flight already begun. Suddenly the miraculous emblem appeared before the troops; and, reanimated by its presence, they gained an overwhelming victory.

Waldemar also attempted the conquest of Sweden, but met with a severe defeat. Against Germany he had the satisfaction of seeing an emperor—or half an emperor, for Otto of Bavaria was never very firmly fixed upon the imperial throne—in flight before him, Otto not daring to give battle to the Danes. For the services thus done Otto's rival, Frederick II, the latter rewarded Waldemar by surrendering to him all the coast lands of Germany "north of the Elbe and the Eider." So proud were the Danes of the triumphs of their king that the path of his glory was marked out among the stars. The "Milky Way" is still known in Denmark as "Waldemar's Way."

In the very midst of his glorious victories Waldemar's downfall came like a bolt from a clear sky. Count Henry of Schwerin, one of the German lords who had been made his vassal, laid a trap for him, and suddenly in the night, while the king and his son were hunting, they were seized and bound. The victims were flung like sacks across a couple of horses and driven madly over the country through the night, until a strong castle was reached, where they were held prisoners.

A Danish army was hurriedly raised; but all the German lords who had cause of complaint against Waldemar united in its defeat. The fortress in which Count Henry held his victims proved impregnable. The Pope commanded him to surrender them, but he refused. The Emperor also commanded it, but in such half-hearted fashion as suggested that he would not be sorry to see the ruin of this too-powerful northern king. Waldemar remained for three years a prisoner, exposed to the cruellest severities; and when at last he regained his freedom, it was only by consenting to such terms as stripped him of his power, and his kingdom of its added territories.

This celebrated though unfortunate sovereign was twice, perhaps thrice, married. The wife of his youth was Dagmar, a Bohemian princess, who was so tender to the poor that they treasure her in memory as a saint; and so devoted was she to her husband that legend represents her body as coming back to momentary life

even in her coffin in answer to his prayers. The last of Waldemar's wives was Berengaria, a Portuguese princess, who in the Danish tales stands as an antithesis to Dagmar, and is represented as the source of every evil that afterward befell the land.

The death of Waldemar left Denmark to another century of decline and civil war. The king, perhaps at Queen Berengaria's supplication, had given his younger sons such vast estates as practically to divide the kingdom among them; and they and their sons after them were engaged in constant quarrelling. Few members of the royal race died in their beds, most were murdered. At last, in 1340, the third of the great Waldemars, known as Attertag (other day), came to the throne, and for a time bade fair to restore the strength and prosperity of the land.

His accession marked the close of a period in which the Danish monarchy sank to the lowest depths it has ever reached. For eight years previous there had been no king in Denmark. Christopher II, the last nominal holder of the title, had died in exile so powerless, that once when a poor count, thinking to curry favor with Denmark's enemies, captured Christopher, the prisoner was freed again because no one cared enough about him to keep him in duress. Denmark itself was wholly under the dominion of German nobles, chiefly the Counts of Holstein, one of whom, called Geert the Great, administered the government and finances of the country as he pleased. All the various provinces had been pawned for enormous sums of money, which were loaned to meet the extravagances of poor Christopher and his predecessors, or rather were exacted from their weakness. Scania was held by the last of the ancient kings of Sweden, Magnus Smek, in pledge for such a sum as seemed impossible to raise. The mainland of Jutland was pawned to Count Geert himself, and the large island of Zealand to his brother, neither of whom had any idea of ever surrendering his possessions.

Suddenly however, in 1340, the downtrodden Danes flared into desperate rebellion, and Count Geert was murdered. A message was sent by roundabout and secret ways to a son of the aged Christopher, an exile in Germany. The young man was invited to assume his father's abandoned crown. He instantly accepted and hurried to Denmark. He was Waldemar Attertag, eminently the man for the moment, cold and strong, restrained, persistent, and when the need arose, false. His character won him his surname, Other day; for, finding himself foiled in many a project by utter lack of means, he did not despair but quietly laid each scheme aside saying, "There will come another day."

For a time it seemed as if that other day always did arrive. To secure his accession the new king had to pledge himself not to protect the murderers of Count Geert; but to give them up for execution would have enraged all Denmark. Somehow they managed to escape to Sweden, and the astute monarch was relieved from his dilemma. A dangerous rival threatened the throne. Instead of losing

a kingdom in precarious fight, Waldemar wedded the rival's sister and received a comfortable dowry. All his life he was engaged in gathering money, until his people bitterly spoke of him as a miser. Yet surely never had man greater need of enormous sums, never did one put them to better use. He sold the distant and unprofitable province of Esthonia, and with the proceeds, added to the whole of his wedding dowry, he redeemed Jutland from the heirs of Count Geert. Partly by purchase, partly by treachery and by much fighting, he drove the Holsteiners out of Zealand as well as from the other islands. He promised the feeble Swedish king aid against a rebellion, exacted some rights over Scania as a recompense, and then seized the province by force. Once more the Danish lands were free of foreign tax-collectors, and their people could raise their heads among the nations. Some authorities have derived Waldemar's surname from this. He caused another and a better day to dawn upon his people.

Waldemar, the Restorer as he is sometimes called, next came into conflict with the Hansa, the great league of the North German commercial cities. Their chief port on the Baltic was Wisby on the island of Gothland off the Swedish coast. In direct defiance of a treaty he had made, the Danish king suddenly attacked Wisby with all his naval power. The inhabitants, he said, had sung satirical songs against him; and he battered down their wall, rode in over the breach and carried off so enormous a booty that the town was ruined, and never again do we see its name in the list of the rich trading cities of the North (1360).

Proud of his exploit, Waldemar called himself King of the Goths. He had made, it seemed, a real step toward the conquest of Sweden. But now all his enemies united against him. The Swedes forced their king, Magnus Smek, to abandon his alliance with Denmark. Magnus' son Hakon, already King of Norway, repudiated his betrothal to Waldemar's daughter and was betrothed instead to a German princess of Holslein. Sweden, Norway, the German lords, the Hanse league, all at once and together bore down on Denmark.

The Hanse towns, the most powerful of his foes, seem always to have been underrated by Waldemar. It was the one weakness in his well-played game, the feudal arrogance which could not conceive of prowess or power as connected with common tradesfolk. He had deliberately defied the Hanse league by his attack on Wisby. Now when the cities declared war, he answered their deputation with jeering, scurrilous verses, beginning,

"If seventy-seven geese

"Come cackling, come cackling at me."*

For a time he made head against all his enemies. The mighty Hanse fleet had dominated the Baltic for almost a century, forbidding the Danes to fish in their

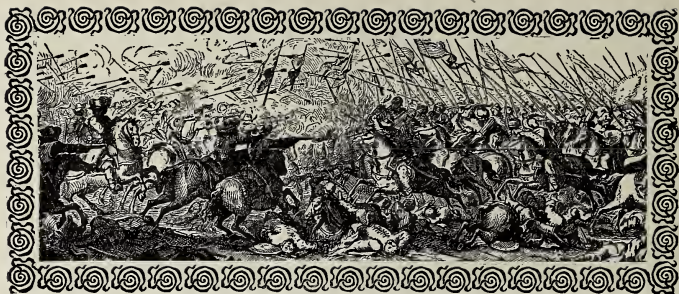
* There were seventy-seven towns in the league, and Hansa might be interpreted, a goose.

own waters, allowing the Danish King himself but a single day each year in which to gather herring for the use of his private household. This fleet was so completely defeated by Waldemar that its admiral was executed by his own townsfolk of Lubeck. The unlucky Holstein princess, setting sail to Norway for her wedding, was shipwrecked on the Danish coast. Waldemar, with many protestations of respect, refused to allow her to proceed upon her dangerous voyage until a calmer season of the year. Meanwhile, he sent hurriedly for the Swedish Magnus and his son Hakon of Norway; and these two, still at heart preferring alliance with Waldemar rather than with their rebellious subjects, came at the call. Hakon resumed his earlier pledge and wedded Waldemar's daughter Margaret, still only eleven years old. The poor Holstein princess found herself led to a cloister instead of a palace, and was forced to become a nun.

These successes enabled Waldemar to patch up a "perpetual peace" with his enemies (1363). He retained all that he had seized and stood for a time at the summit of his power. Unfortunately he failed to preserve the affections of his own people. The enormous expenses entailed by his wars and his negotiations, had led to the imposing of very heavy taxes throughout Denmark. At first the people, recognizing the necessity for this, eagerly upheld their king in everything. But after a quarter of a century or so, they forgot the far worse conditions they had suffered under the German domination of Count Geert, they became more and more rebellious, and accused their ruler of hoarding the vast wealth he took from them. His earlier title of the Restorer was lost in a later one; he was called Waldemar the Bad. Neither had the Hanse league forgotten its defeat and the insults heaped upon its deputies. It was slowly gathering a fleet intended to be so enormous as to make resistance impossible.

In 1367 there was a sudden uprising of the Jutland nobles against the king. The powerful Hanse fleet took part with the rebels; and Waldemar, seeing himself outmatched, justified his name. "There will come another day," he said, and departed with his family into exile. His subjects declared that he carried with him all the enormous treasure which he had been collecting for so many years.

From this time Denmark lay in the power of the Hansa. It was even agreed that the approval of the League must be secured in electing all future Danish kings. In 1372, the League consented to restore Waldemar to his throne, but on such harsh terms as made him little more than a vassal of the traders. A few years later he died, before finding time to put in operation any of the schemes, which his resolute brain must surely have been planning, to regain his power.

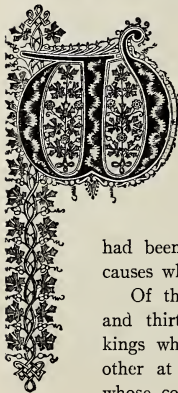


ERIC OF POMERANIA REPELLING THE POLES

Chapter IV

QUEEN MARGARET AND THE UNION OF KALMAR

[*Special Authorities:* Fryxell, "History of Sweden"; Barfod, "History of Denmark from 1319"; Erslev, "Queen Margaret"; Suhm, "History of Denmark to 1400"; Dahlman, "History of Denmark."]



ALDEMAR ATTERTAG set on foot one train of events whose consequences even his far-seeing brain could scarcely have expected. His daughter Margaret, the pawn of his political schemes, wedded at the age of eleven to Hakon of Norway, became Margaret the Great, the "Semiramis of the North," the reuniter of the three Scandinavian kingdoms in the Union of Kalmar. This union, which lasted in some shape for almost two entire centuries, was formally proclaimed in 1397, but events had been shaping toward it long before. Let us review briefly the causes which led to this sudden union.

Of the happenings in Norway and Sweden during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is scarcely necessary to speak. The kings who descended from Ragnar Lodbrok had all slain one another at last. The best of them in Sweden was Eric the Saint, whose coat of arms is still seen upon the Swedish flag, and who on his father's side was a son of the common peasantry. He ruled in 1155, and then came a century of his successors, the "Bondar" or peasant kings, chosen alternately from the Svea or Swedes and the Gota or Goths. Well-nigh a century followed of the "Folkingar" kings chosen from one family of nobles remotely allied to the royal line, until in 1319 there was but one remaining male

descendant even faintly connected with the ancient royal house. This was a child three years old, and him the Swedes crowned as king. The common people of Norway, rebelling against the tyranny of their nobles, sent an embassy to request that this last feeble branch of the ancient royal tree be allowed to rule them also. It was this king, the weak-minded Magnus Smek, who was in alliance with Waldemar Attertag.

The people of Sweden and Norway had small cause to be proud of having chosen Magnus; for as he grew up he proved contemptible in many ways, abandoned himself to gross pleasures and was wholly under the dictation of his worthless queen and debased favorites. In Sweden the people deposed him and crowned his son Eric in his stead. The Norwegians also demanded his abdication, conferring their crown upon his second son, Hakon, the youth who wedded Waldemar's daughter Margaret after once jilting her for a German princess. So Hakon became King in Norway, but in Sweden young Eric died, and Magnus temporarily regained his throne. The Swedes however, could never forgive Magnus for surrendering Scania to Waldemar. In 1363 they again rose in rebellion and, deposing their feeble king, offered the throne to a powerful German prince, Albert of Mecklenburg, in the hope that he might prove able to defend it against Magnus, against his son, Hakon of Norway, and even against their ally, Waldemar.

Waldemar, as we have seen, had disasters to encounter at home. Hakon, after one brief and not over-successful campaign, made no further effort to aid his father against Sweden; but only provided the aged incompetent with a home in Norway. Over this latter kingdom, Hakon and his wife Margaret ruled wisely for several years, and had a little son, Olaf, destined to be king of both Norway and Denmark.

In Denmark the sons of Waldemar Attertag died before their father, leaving him the last male descendant of his race. So on his death (1375) the Danes, who had always been devoted to his daughter Margaret, elected little four-year-old Olaf as his grandfather's successor, and invited his mother to become regent. Her pacific government won her the friendship of the Hanse towns, which upheld her every measure. So successful was her rule that when Hakon of Norway died (1380), Margaret was at once proclaimed regent over that kingdom also, to govern it for her son.

Olaf was a bold and intellectual lad and bade fair to become an energetic ruler in his own right; but he died when only seventeen (1387). Margaret's enemies accused her of poisoning him in order to retain the power in her own hands, but there seems little in her character to justify the suspicion. She mourned her son long, and though both Norway and Denmark immediately besought her to continue to rule over them, she was slow and seemingly hesitant to assume the actual title and dignity of a reigning sovereign.

Sweden did not fall so peacefully into her hands. The German prince who had been invited to defend it from the follies of King Magnus, became a tyrant in his turn; and the Swedish peasants, contrasting their evil plight with the happy state of Denmark and Norway under Margaret, declared him deposed and entreated Margaret to assume the throne. The Swedish nobles, however, were by no means united in her favor. Many of them preferred rapine to peace, license to restraint; and it was not until 1389 that Margaret finally accepted the repeated call of the Swedes and marched an army against their German king. He was defeated and made prisoner; but Stockholm held out in his favor and endured a three years' siege. It was not until 1398 that this last stronghold of the Germans in the north finally passed into Queen Margaret's hands.

Meanwhile, being practically assured of victory, Margaret had planned and consummated the union, meant to be perpetual, of her three kingdoms. Her only son being dead, she sent for her sister's grandson, Duke Eric of Pomerania, and announced him her heir. As soon as she could persuade the council of each kingdom to accept him, she resigned the throne, and at Kalmar in 1397, Eric was proclaimed King of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

It was agreed that in future the three kingdoms should have but one ruler, though each should retain its own laws and its own council of government. If one became involved in war, the others must aid it, and a treaty made by the common sovereign was to be binding upon all.

Though Margaret had thus hastened to relinquish her nominal title as a sovereign, she continued to direct the government with rare strength and tact until her death (1412). Probably in her later years the power of her united realms was more than equal to that of the great Hanse league, which had crushed her father. But she was far too wise to put the question to the test, and always maintained the most amicable relations with the German merchants, a matter not difficult for any monarch who would simply flatter their vanity by treating them as equals.

Young King Eric remained a mere figurehead in his own empire. He managed to stir up a quarrel with Denmark's old enemies, the Counts of Holstein; and Margaret seems to have been quite willing that he should continue fighting there, and thus engross himself and the other young hot-heads of her domains, whose energies must needs find outlet somewhere. After Margaret's death, however, Eric's irresponsible character became another matter. So set was he on his Holstein war and its vengeance, that he wholly neglected his own realms. The Holsteiners could not meet him in open battle, but they manfully defended their strong castles, and Eric laid siege to one after another with very little success. He was always calling on Sweden and Norway for more troops and more money. Of these kingdoms themselves he knew nothing, and kept sending Danish and Ger-

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